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## **NJMC Concludes First Detailed Analysis of Vital Flood Structures in the Meadowlands**

LYNDHURST, N.J. – The Board of the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission fulfilled a requirement of the new Hackensack Meadowlands Floodplain Management Plan today by presenting analysis that shows the breadth of work needed to remedy chronic flooding.

“We are bringing together the expertise and know-how of municipalities and state government to implement more cost-efficient problem solving across borders,” said NJMC Chair Susan Bass Levin, also the Commissioner of the state Department of Community Affairs. “By sharing knowledge and resources, plus establishing better maintenance protocols, we can cut red tape, attract federal dollars and provide tools that address this serious problem.”

The Hackensack Meadowlands Floodplain Management Plan, which was approved by the Board in October 2004, identified and prioritized chronic flooding zones in addition to setting out future actions. Today’s presentation was one of the requirements of that plan and provides a status report on the Meadowlands tide gate system, revealing that of the 34 tide gates and pump stations inspected, 19 are fully functional, nine are functional with restrictions and six do not work at all. Nine of these structures are pump stations, and of those only five are fully functional.

Each of the flood control structures in the District were examined by NJMC staff and local officials at least three times over a four-month period. This included inspections at high tide, low tide and during a rainstorm. Boats were used to get to structures that could not be examined on foot.

The structures deemed a top priority in the analysis include the East Riser Tide Gates, Peach Island Creek Tide Gates and Dell Road Tide Gates in Carlstadt, the West Riser Tide Gates in Moonachie, St. Pauls Avenue Pump Station in Secaucus and the Cauyga Dike Pump Station and Tide Gates in Kearny. Many of these, such as the Rutherford Tide Gates, are beyond the point where basic maintenance can return them to full working order and require substantial investment.

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During each inspection, NJMC staff examined the upstream and downstream area and made sure trash racks were free of debris, tide gates sealed properly, and looked for damage. If the structure was damaged, the extent of the damage and the required maintenance was recorded. Any tide gate or flooding structure that is marginally functional and appears to cause flooding to buildings or homes is now being inspected by NJMC staff on a weekly basis.

This is a new role for the NJMC which has joined with Meadowlands municipalities in seeking regional solutions and avoiding inefficient and redundant approaches that can come from a more fragmented approach.

As with the Hackensack Meadowlands Floodplain Management Plan, the analysis on anti-flooding infrastructure will be submitted to the Federal Emergency Management Agency. If accepted by FEMA, the floodplain management plan and this analysis will make the NJMC eligible for millions of federal dollars to address flooding in the Meadowlands District.

“Where the management plan outlined what areas need to be addressed, this work delves deeper into the structures that are integral in preventing flooding in the Meadowlands,” said NJMC Executive Director Robert Ceberio. “This agency is stepping up by not only identifying the problem, but by offering solutions.”

The NJMC Board of Commissioners also voted to move forward with a feasibility study to create a regional storm water utility in the Meadowlands District to undertake flood control projects and maintenance of infrastructure. This study will examine a utility that will address flooding on a regional, long-term basis without burdening taxpayers or municipalities.

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